Claims:

What is claimed is:

1. A collaboration system that allows the exchange of data between participants in an electronic commerce environment, comprising:

a collaboration space defining the rules governing said transfer of data and the role of said participants;

a collaboration hub for the transfer of data between participants; and

a hub transport that allows a participant to send and receive data from the collaboration hub in accordance with the definitions of the collaboration space.

2. The collaboration system of claim 1 wherein each participant includes a collaboration enabler wherein said collaboration enabler includes a business logic specified by the participant.

3. The collaboration system of claim 2 wherein the collaboration hub includes a business logic compatible with that of the collaboration enabler.

4. The collaboration system of claim 1 wherein the collaboration hub includes a data logic for intelligent transfer of data according to participant specifications.

5. The collaboration system of claim 2 wherein said collaboration enabler includes an interface to a participant workflow process.

6. The collaboration system of claim 5 wherein said participant workflow process determines the flow of data between the collaboration enabler and the collaboration hub.

7. The collaboration system of claim 6 wherein the workflow process generates XML messages.

8. The collaboration system of claim 1 further comprising:

a conversation manager for managing the flow of data between participants.

9. The collaboration system of claim 1 wherein the collaboration space is accessible via the Internet.

10. The collaboration system of claim 9 wherein the collaboration space may be accessed by specifying a uniform resource locator for said collaboration space.

11. A method of allowing participants to exchange data in an electronic commerce environment, comprising the steps of:

providing a collaboration space defining the rules governing said transfer of data and the role of said participants; and

transferring data between participants at a collaboration hub;

allowing a participant to send and receive data from the collaboration hub via a hub transport in accordance with the definitions of the collaboration space.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein each participant includes a collaboration enabler for sending and receiving data via the hub transport, wherein said collaboration enabler includes a business logic specified by the participant.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the collaboration hub uses business logic compatible with that of the collaboration enabler.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein the collaboration hub uses data logic for intelligent transfer of data according to participant specifications.

15. The method of claim 12 wherein said participant collaboration enabler interfaces with a participant workflow process.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said participant workflow process determines the flow of data between the collaboration enabler and the collaboration hub.

17. The method of claim 16 including generating XML messages during the worklfow process and transferring them to the collaboration hub.

18. The method of claim 11 further comprising:

managing the flow of data as a conversation between participants.

19. The method of claim 11 wherein the collaboration space is accessible via the Internet.

20. The method of claim 19 further comprising:

accessing the collaboration space by specifying a uniform resource locator for said collaboration space.

21. The collaboration system of claim 1 further comprising a workflow directing the transfer of data between participants.

22. The collaboration system of claim 21 wherein the workflow includes at least one flow lane for each participant and the action of the workflow is determined by data sent to and received from a first participant flow lane to a second participant flow lane.

23. The collaboration system of claim 22 wherein the workflow is defined by an XML definition.

24. The collaboration system of claim 23, wherein the XML definition is created by a UML modeler.